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THE QUEST FOR THE ORIGINS OF THE APPLE TREE

In a career that spanned more than five decades, horticulturist **Buks Nel**, wondered about many things in life...and more specifically about apple trees. He has solved many plant riddles, made new discoveries (including his now-famous Bigbucks apple cultivar) and answered many questions.

But even after writing two books about apples, with colleague Henk Griessel, there were still two questions that remained...Where did apples come from and how did the ancient wild apple forests of Kazakhstan end up restricted to the Tian Shan Mountains bordering China and Russia?

Read more about Buks's epic trek, with **Frederik Voigt** from SAPO, [here](#).

See how Buks teaches his guide Afrikaans [here](#).

Pictured here: Frederik Voigt and Buks Nel standing next to the 300-year-old apple tree.



DECIDUOUS FRUIT INDUSTRY AWARD WINNERS 2020

The worldwide coronavirus pandemic has forced the South African deciduous fruit industry to present its annual awards digitally this year. Meet the winners:

- Specialist Agricultural Worker: **Rudowaan Raynell Isaacs** (top middle)
- Advanced Agricultural Worker: **Lance du Toit** (bottom far left)
- New Generation Award: **Dirk Louw** (top left)
- Research and Technology Award: **Phyllis Burger and Andries Daniels** (bottom second from right)
- OSH Reinecke Frontrunner Award: **Alexander "Boetie" Kriel** (bottom right)
- Izethelo Media Award: **Lizma van Zyl** (bottom second from left)
- Special Industry Award: **Colleen Goosen** (top right)

Read more [here](#).

And follow us on social media to watch videos of the winners.



THE LEADING LIGHT OF PALS

Lien Visagie is the newly elected chairperson of the board of Partners in Agri Land Solutions (PALS). Getting there was a long and a hard road, but the road ahead is the real challenge. Gerrit Rautenbach discovered how a light bulb made it all happen for Lien.

Read the full article [here](#).



AGRI'S GOT TALENT OP DIE GROOT ONTBYT

Thea van Zyl, Hortgro se geleentheidskoördineerder, het onlangs by Die Groot Ontbyt op kykNET gekuier, waar sy meer vertel het oor Agri's Got Talent - die vrugtebedryf se talentkompetisie vir landbouwerkers. Sels COVID kon nie vanjaar AGT keer nie. Die wenner word op 9 Oktober 2020 bekend gemaak. Volg en ondersteun die projek op sosiale media. Kyk [hier](#).



ALL ABOUT BEES

The deciduous fruit industry is almost totally dependent on a healthy honeybee population and a viable beekeeping industry. The relationship between beekeepers and deciduous fruit growers will more often than not be described as complicated. Yet, both parties know they need each other to survive and to grow their businesses. Read more [here](#).

POLLINATION SNAGS?

Mike Allsopp, from the ARC's bee research unit, says that commercial pollination is a critical component of integrated orchard management practice. Obtaining optimal fruit set requires the correct orchard design (selection and positioning of pollinisers), flower management (pruning and thinning), control of alternative forage, as well as the proper introduction and usage of adequate strength honeybee colonies. Download the guide [here](#).

FCM COULD DAMAGE YOUR PROFIT

False codling moth (FCM) is an indigenous pest to South Africa that can damage fruit and could have serious cost implications for your crop. For an update on its identification, control, download our FCM research article series, as published in the Fresh Quarterly, [here](#).

Download handy FCM poster [here](#).

INTEGRATED ORCHARD FLOOR MANAGEMENT

Integrated orchard floor management is critical as it will allow for more sustainable fruit production, but information on it is limited. As diversity forms part of soil health, management strategies like cover crop plant diversity could potentially be of value.

To see what effect the cover crop diversity and minimum-till have on soil health and orchard floor management, watch our exciting video: **Orchard floor management and soil health in deciduous fruit orchards**.

[Watch Now](#)

FRUIT INDUSTRY POST-COVID: NAMPO VIRTUAL

Hugh Campbell, General Manager of Hortgro Science, and **Jacques du Preez**, General Manager: Trade and Markets recently spoke at NAMPO Virtual on the SA Pome and Stone Fruit Industry: Post Covid-19.

[Watch Now](#)

PLUM BLOOM WEBINAR - 6 Oct, 15:00 - 15:45

Hortgro would like to invite you to attend a short, free webinar **Tuesday 6 October at 15:00** with dormancy expert Dr Nigel Cook and stone fruit technical advisor Charl Stander who we will be discussing the anomalies observed this season in the timing of bloom of plum cultivars.

Email Thea van Zyl (thea@hortgro.co.za) for more information, to RSVP and to submit questions to be discussed. A Zoom link to the webinar will be sent after registration.

→ INFORMATION AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

D6/Hortgro24 Information app. Email taryn@hortgro.co.za for more information.

→ HORTGRO PUBLICATIONS

[Key Deciduous Fruit Statistics](#)

Hortgro Stone: [Timely Hints/Tydige Wenke: October 2020](#)

→ HORTGRO YOUTUBE KANAAL

Vind ons videobiblioteek vol bedryfsinligting [hier](#).

PLUS: 36 Boordopleiding video's nou beskikbaar in [AFRIKAANS](#), [XHOSA](#) en [ENGENS](#)

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S DESK

Breakout & Outbreak

After some hectic weeks, strident and tedious board/council meetings, I am one of the privileged that could be broken out from the stresses, strains and tedium of the various lockdown phases which in fact proved to be very exhausting. So, the breakaway to visit friends and some remote places during the latter half of September was very welcome and Level 1 somehow feels more normal.

It is clear that the breakout is not unique and that many fellow South Africans (as to kick seemingly like to address us as) followed suit. This in itself is great as this will no doubt help the PRC start our economy which suffered not just since March, but also in the past decade. Having the opportunity to travel again brings a huge responsibility to ensure continued compliance with the COVID safety guidelines.

Unfortunately, I have witnessed way too many people who do not comply with the basics of wearing a mask and maintaining social distancing in public places. Hand sanitisation seems to be adhered to, but I am very sceptical about some of the substances I was exposed to under the guise of sanitizers. This varied from thick gels to some very watery solutions which in my view don't contain much alcohol.

As we approach our next harvesting season, my plea is that **we ensure continued vigilance and compliance in our homes, in offices, on our farms and in our packhouses. The ball is fairly and squarely in our court – us as a population, to safeguard ourselves against the risk of COVID transmission.**

As I write this, many European and other countries are forced to move back to more stringent measures and re-introducing restrictions as the so-called second wave is hitting them.

In the absence of a vaccine (which is clearly still many months, even a year away), and borrowing from one of Pres Trump's most recent faux pax's referring to herd mentality rather than a herd immunity (!), we need to remain vigilant. Although fatalities seem to be dropping (better understanding of the virus and treatment, as well as younger people getting infected?), we still experience +1,500 infections per day. This is too high.

It is therefore squarely on us as a community to prevent a second wave. So, please let's discipline ourselves and those closest to us to ensure continued adherence to the regulations and prevent another spike.

This is everyone's duty. We can prevent this.

Until next time.

Anton

One painful duty fulfilled makes the next plainer and easier – Hellen Keller



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